OFFICIAL DATA

5.7 million new businesses *in one year.*

Census Bureau data show 5.67 million applications to start a business in 2025, the most in any year of the past decade, and 2026 is running higher still.

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more than in 2019

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January to September 2026, compared with the same months of 2025

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new business applications a year for every US journalist

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New business applications at a record: the competition for attention

KEY FINDINGS

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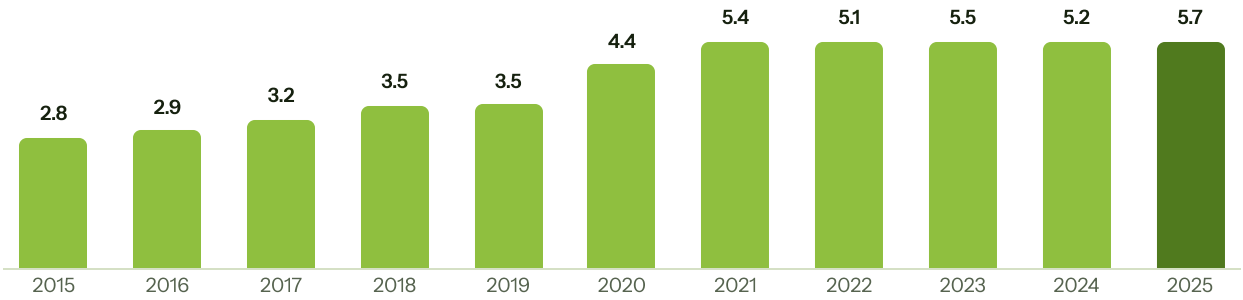
Short answer: Americans filed 5,671,836 applications to start a business in 2025, 62% more than in 2019 and the most in any year since at least 2015.[1] From January to September 2026 they filed 15% more than in the same months of 2025.[1] With 47,100 journalists in the country, that is about 120 new business applications a year for every journalist.[3] More companies compete for the same attention, so a company needs a real story to be noticed.

A decade of growth

The Census Bureau counts applications for an employer identification number (EIN), the first legal step to starting most businesses. Annual totals rose from 2.80 million in 2015 to 3.50 million in 2019, jumped to 5.39 million in 2021 and reached 5.67 million in 2025.[1]

Business applications in the US, by year

Millions of applications



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Business Formation Statistics, via FRED (not seasonally adjusted monthly data, summed by year by us).

2026 is running higher

From January to September 2026, Americans filed 4,927,840 business applications, compared with 4,273,086 in the same nine months of 2025, 15% more.[1]

Business applications, January to September

Number of applications



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Business Formation Statistics, via FRED (data updated October 14, 2026).

Fewer of them plan to hire

The Census Bureau flags "high-propensity" applications: those likely to turn into businesses with a payroll. In 2025 there were 1,708,842, 30% of all applications. In 2019 the share was 38%.[2] Most of the growth is in applications less likely to hire, such as one-person businesses, and they compete for customers and attention too.

Applications likely to become employers

High-propensity applications as a share of all business applications



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Business Formation Statistics, via FRED. Shares are our calculation.

More companies, fewer reporters

The US had 47,100 news analysts, reporters and journalists in 2025, and the government expects that number to fall.[3] Divide 5.67 million new business applications by 47,100 journalists and you get about 120 a year for each journalist, before counting the millions of businesses that already exist. See also PR people per journalist.

What it means for getting noticed

- **"We launched" isn't news.** Millions of businesses launch every year. Journalists look for what is different: a result, a number, a person, a problem solved.
- **Proof stands out.** When there are more new companies than ever, independent coverage in a respected outlet is one of the few signals buyers and investors can check.
- **Start early.** Coverage takes weeks to plan and publish. Building it before a launch or a funding round beats rushing after it.

How we did this

We used the Census Bureau's Business Formation Statistics, monthly and not seasonally adjusted, as published on FRED by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (data updated October 14, 2026), and summed the months of each calendar year. A business application is an application for an employer identification number; not every application becomes an active business. The journalist count is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The per-journalist figure is our own calculation.

Questions

How many new businesses are started in the US each year?

Americans filed 5,671,836 business applications in 2025, the most in any year since at least 2015 (Census Bureau). Not every application becomes an active business.

Are business applications still rising?

Yes. From January to September 2026, applications were 15% higher than in the same months of 2025, and 2025 was 62% above 2019.

What are high-propensity business applications?

Applications the Census Bureau flags as likely to become businesses with a payroll. They were 30% of all applications in 2025, down from 38% in 2019.

Sources

1. Business Applications: Total for All NAICS in the United States (BABATOTALNSAUS), U.S. Census Bureau, via FRED (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis).
   https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/BABATOTALNSAUS
2. High-Propensity Business Applications: Total for All NAICS in the United States (BAHBATOTALNSAUS), U.S. Census Bureau, via FRED (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis).
   https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/BAHBATOTALNSAUS
3. Occupational Outlook Handbook: News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
   https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/reporters-correspondents-and-broadcast-news-analysts.htm

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